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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2432

Oct. 13, 1989

BERTINI & GARDNER SWORN IN -- On Oct. 10, Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter swore in Catherine Ann Bertini as assistant secretary of agriculture for food and consumer services and Bruce L. Gardner as assistant secretary of agriculture for economics.

Bertini will be responsible for USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, Human Nutrition Information Service and the Office of Consumer Affairs. Before coming to USDA, Bertini was acting assistant secretary for HHS' Family Support Administration, where she managed that agency's \$14 billion program.

Gardner will be responsible for agencies within USDA which conduct research in domestic and foreign ag economics; prepare official data and estimates on production, supply, demand and prices; and coordinate economic information gathering and dissemination. Since 1981, Gardner has been a professor in the department of agricultural and resource economics at the University of Maryland, College Park.

COMPUTERS & FARMERS -- Everywhere you turn, things are computerized -- except on farms. Fewer than three farmers out of 100 used computers for financial record-keeping in 1987, says USDA Economist Diane Willimack. Nearly 16 percent of farmers use a financial records workbook; another 56 percent use general ledgers or notebooks. How about the remaining 25 percent? Well, they use "other methods," including 14 percent who use the old "shoebox" or similar "informal" method. Contact: Diane Willimack (202) 475-3481.

COAL BURNING RESIDUE SAFE FOR FARMS -- A residue from power plants that use cleaner coal-burning technology is safe to use to improve soil on farms and strip mines, according to USDA scientists. The coal-burning technology removes acid-forming oxides of sulfur, the major contributors to acid rain. The burning by-product contains gypsum and various essential plant nutrients, says William L. Stout, USDA soil scientist. Farm use of the residue must be approved by EPA, Stout said. Contact: William L. Stout (814) 863-0947.

NATIONAL ACADEMY STUDY ON RESEARCH -- The National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences has called for a major initiative to increase the federal investment in agricultural research by \$500 million per year. USDA Assistant Secretary for Science & Education Charles Hess said: "To be perfectly candid, I would like to be able to endorse the funding program proposed in the initiative. But, as you realize we operate within the constraints of the federal budget." In preparing future budget proposals, Hess said, USDA will be considering how, and to what extent, the NAS research initiative can be addressed in relation to other priority programs. Contact: Mike Hoback (202) 447-5035.

VIDEOTAPE ON BIOCONTROL -- USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service recently released a 30-minute videotape "Biological Control -- A Natural Alternative." The video was produced to provide a greater understanding and appreciation of a new/old pest control option that is environmentally safe. The video will be for sale from the Customer Services Section, National Audiovisual Center, 8700 Edgeworth Dr., Capitol Heights, Md. 20745 (301) 763-1896. A companion brochure, "Biological Control -- Spreading the benefits," is available free, in limited quantities, from: Printing & Distribution Mgt., USDA, APHIS, M&B, G-110 Federal Bldg., Hyattsville, Md. 20782 (301) 436-8413.

FROSTED FORAGE ALERT -- Unharvested sorghum or sudangrass hybrids can become poisonous through frost damage. Farmers should consider the dangers of feeding these forages to livestock, says John Underwood, an Ohio State Univ. agronomist. Ensiling frost damaged material for two or more weeks is the best solution, Underwood says. Contact: John Underwood (614) 292-2011.

HOBGOBLIN ALERT -- It won't be long now before the hobgoblins will be out in full force. Halloween is always a fun time for kids. Charlotte Cross, an extension clothing specialist with the University of New Hampshire, has some ideas on how to make certain Halloween is both safe and fun. Some include: avoid costumes with flowing sleeves, long sashes and dark colors; make sure masks are secure -- a safer alternative is makeup; make sure costumes are flame resistant. For more tips, contact: Holly Y. Ayer (603) 862-1498.

TEXAS CATTLE STATISTICS -- Looking for a set of Texas cattle statistics that will fit right in your pocket? Look no more. The Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Foundation has a pocket-sized set of current cattle and agricultural statistical information. For a copy, contact: Carol Williams (817) 332-6167.

SIX-LEGGED, WINGED RUSSIAN IMMIGRANTS may soon help American farmers battle the Russian wheat aphid, says USDA's Richard S. Soper. The immigrants, seven species of lady beetles and wasps, are the first exchanges of biological pest controls resulting from recent USDA research agreements with the Soviet Union, Soper said. Soper left Oct. 9 for the USSR to firm up plans for next year's joint studies and explorations. Contact: Jim De Quattro (301) 344-4296.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1688 -- Getting discoveries & inventions by government researchers into commercial development and the hands of the public is the subject of this week's program, presented by Maria Bynum. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1170 -- More food science money? Paying for food safety; assuring quality fruit; the school lunch program & how it works; the bionic tree? (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE #1677 -- USDA news highlights; upland cotton program changes; some suprising facts about how farmers keep their records; stress & pigs; greenhouse effect & livestock. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1241 -- Yeasts & you; cheaper alcohol; new products from yeasts; catfish test; vaccinating fish. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Thurs., Oct. 19, dairy outlook; Fri., Oct. 20, catfish production, cattle on feed, red meat production, ag outlook; Mon., Oct. 23, rice outlook; Tues., Oct. 24, crop/weather update; Wed., Oct. 25, poultry production, foreign trade update; Thurs., Oct. 26, oil crops outlook; Tues., Oct. 31, crop/weather update, world cocoa situation, world tobacco situation, ag prices.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.  
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

USDA TV NEWS SERVICE -- (Oct. 12, 14 & 16) USDA World Board Chairman James Donald on crop production; Lester Crawford, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, on heptachlor tests; Jesse Moore, director of the cotton division of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, on cotton classing; USDA Economist Merritt Padgett on agricultural resources; Steve Abrams, associate administrator of USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development, on World Food Day.

AG UPDATE -- Eric Parsons talks with Orville Overboe about the 1990 feed grain program; Kathleen Katras interviews Charles Cunningham on the upland cotton program.

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on acoustic detection of insects; DeBoria Janifer gives an update on the popcorn craze; Will Pemble examines detoxifying pesticides; and Chris Larson takes a look at flower exports.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY . . . . . 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D  
SATURDAY . . . . . 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D  
MONDAY . . . . . 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D  
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

WARM ... weather is needed in North Dakota to finish the sugar beet harvest, says Lyle Romine (American Ag Net, Fargo). Temperatures below freezing harden the plants making them susceptible to breaking. Romine says grain harvest yields were low due to insufficient moisture; however, the southeastern section of the state received more rain and yields were somewhat higher. Subsoil is dry in the entire state.

BETTER ... than anticipated harvest for corn and beans, says Don Wick (KWOA, Worthington, Minn.); beans in the mid 40s and some corn about 150 bushels. Don says rains "hooked" into the area during the growing season exactly when needed. But there wasn't enough moisture to recharge subsoil. While late-season dryness has helped the harvest, topsoil could blow. Rapid changes in weather during Fall are expected to generate wind that could make the situation worse. Don says the region needs soaking rains.

### ***Farm Broadcasters Letter***



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DRYNESS ... in the north is moving further south. The Army Corps of Engineers says it is limiting the number of barges towed on the Mississippi River, especially near St. Louis. But river levels are not as low as during last year's drought and there are no major delays. USDA Chief Meteorologist Norton Strommen says a factor in low river levels is much of the rain in the upper Midwest has been absorbed into the ground, leaving little for runoff to fill streams.

RECENT ... trip across Iowa gave Gary Wergin (KDTH, Dubuque, Iowa) an opportunity to see agricultural conditions first-hand. Dry fields helped speed the harvest and most corn is in. Eastern sections had average yields, no big surprises and no records, with some areas reaching 130 bushels. Gary says heavy frost on sorghum will prevent it from attaining height that allows development for good forage. This could mean a winter shortage.

REGISTER ... now for the NAFB convention, Nov. 8-12 in Kansas City, Mo. Stop by the USDA booth at Trade Talk and meet the crew.

VIC POWELL  
CHIEF, Radio & TV Division